

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

City of Winnemucca  
Wastewater Treatment Project  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2014-0031-EA

### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based on the interdisciplinary analysis conducted in the City of Winnemucca Wastewater Treatment Project Environmental Assessment (EA), DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2014-0031-EA, dated May 2016, a review of the wastewater treatment and effluent disposal facilities plan, and my consideration of the Council of Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts, I have determined that the impacts associated with the Proposed Action are not significant. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the City of Winnemucca Wastewater Treatment Project is not required.

I have determined that the Proposed Action is in conformance with the *Winnemucca District Resource Management Plan* (WDRMP), May 2015, and the Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment, (GRSG Plan Amendment) September 2015. The Proposed Action is consistent with other federal agency, state, and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with federal law and Federal Land Policy Management Act provisions.

### **Context**

The City of Winnemucca's existing wastewater treatment and effluent disposal facility have been in operation for approximately 50 years, providing treatment of residential and commercial wastewater produced within the City of Winnemucca's service area. The facilities are located in close proximity to the Humboldt River (about 500 feet from the riverbank), northwest of central Winnemucca between Interstate 80 and the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) have expressed concerns with the location of the existing effluent disposal site and the condition of the existing treatment facility. Specifically, the EPA and NDEP are concerned with the potential hydraulic connection between the existing rapid infiltration basins and the Humboldt River, as well as the potential for nitrate contamination of the groundwater.

In order to address these concerns, the City of Winnemucca proposed to construct and operate a new and more efficient effluent disposal system and decommissions the existing facility. The

new facility would be located 3.6 miles west of the existing facilities on city-owned private land and land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Winnemucca District Office, Humboldt River Field Office. The City of Winnemucca submitted an Application for Land for Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP; Form 2740-1) to the BLM in order to acquire the public land through the R&PP Act. If this project is approved, the BLM would convey the public lands to the City of Winnemucca, via patent, for the construction and operation of the proposed treatment, disposal, and wastewater reuse facility. The land requested under the R&PP includes Township 36 North, Range 37 East, section 28 (640 acres) and the portion of section 32 (580 acres) north of an existing railroad track, a total of 1,220 acres.

## **Intensity**

### *1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

Design features and environmental protection measures were incorporated into the proposed project to reduce or eliminate potential impacts.

#### Beneficial

The proposed action would move the operations of wastewater treatment out of the 100 year floodplain; accommodate future growth of the City of Winnemucca; provide employment opportunity during construction and; avoid fines associated with continued use of the existing facility.

#### Adverse

The analysis concluded that there would be an incremental impact on the assessment area with the addition of a new light source on the landscape.

There is a perception that this type of project would cause adjacent property devaluation. Project attributes that could influence property values, such as odor and visual intrusion, were analyzed. All Environmental Justice (EJ) requirements for analysis were followed and it was concluded that there are no EJ populations affected by the proposal. The current Humboldt County Master Plan identifies this area as mixed use which allows for a variety of developed uses. Any change in property values are expected to be minor and speculative in nature.

### *2) The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.*

The proposed action would remove the potential hydraulic connection of the existing facility and the Humboldt River and essentially eliminate a potential for nitrate contamination to

ground water. The project is not expected to have any degree of adverse public health or safety impacts.

- 3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, public lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

The project is near the California National Historic Trail (CNHT) and historic properties; however, the project would not adversely impact any of the unique characteristics of the CNHT or these historic properties. The project would not affect park lands, prime farmland, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas.

- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

Although not highly controversial, there is a perception that this type of project would cause adjacent property devaluation. Project attributes that could influence property values, such as odor and visual intrusion, were analyzed. All EJ requirements for analysis were followed and it was concluded that there are no EJ populations affected by the proposal. The current Humboldt County Master Plan identifies this area as mixed use which allows for a variety of developed uses. Any change in property values are expected to be minor and speculative in nature.

- 5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the environment are likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The project is a modernized wastewater treatment facility and effluent pivot operation that presents no highly uncertain or unique or unknown risks.

- 6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

Implementation of the Proposed Action would not set a precedent or establish any principles for future decisions.

- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

Based on the analysis, there would be a cumulative but not significant impact on the assessment area due to the additional light source on the landscape.

- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

All areas in the R&PP have been inventoried and evaluated for historic properties. No NRHP eligible, listed, or unevaluated properties would be directly or indirectly adversely impacted by the Proposed Action.

- 9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

No threatened or endangered species or their habitat would be affected by the Proposed Action.

- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

No threats of violation were identified in the preparation of the EA.

/s/ David Kampwerth

5/4/16

**David Kampwerth**  
**Field Manager**  
**Humboldt River Field Office**

**Date**